

I understand a hearing will be held this week regarding the above Act. I am concerned with Section 2. That section refers to a pilot program for the severe end of the autism spectrum. The bill's pilot program language states, "(b) The pilot program shall provide participating persons with (1) behavior management services through the use of behavior analysis, (2) training in development of coping skills, (3) on-site clinical oversight, including the availability of direct care personnel to address behavioral needs on a twenty-four-hour basis, and (4) other individualized services."

Please consider the use of "evidenced based practices" instead of just "behavior analysis." A recent report entitled, "Evidenced-Based Practices for Children, Youth, and Young Adults with Autism Spectrum Disorder," funded by the U.S. Dept. Of Ed. found:

The increased prevalence of ASD has intensified the demand for effective educational and therapeutic services, and intervention science is now providing evidence about which practices are effective." The purpose of that report is to describe a process for the identification of evidence-based practices (EBPs).

Behavior analysis is one way to address behaviors associated with autism but certainly not the only way. There appears to be no reason to limit behavior management services to the one approach in light of the recent Dept. Of Ed. report.

In fact, the methods used by providers of the Behavior Analysis approach have recently come under question when the use of seclusion in so called "scream rooms" was publicized. As a parent of a son with autism, I am horrified by the over use of seclusion and restraint in nonpublic settings. (Other methods do not use such extreme strategies.) The bill, as written, hands over to these same organizations the most fragile group within the autism spectrum, that is, those who literally have no voice to let others know if they are subjected to abuse. Here is a link that references the recent data about restraint and seclusion.

<http://www.nhregister.com/social-affairs/20140210/restraints-seclusions-target-connecticut-students-with-autism>

Currently, a federal bill introduced by Sen. Harkin but supported by our own Senator seeks to do away with seclusion entirely because it is dangerous and the practice isn't supported by evidence that it works. At a minimum, if the bill includes "behavior analysis" then some safeguards need to be inserted to prevent abuse, e.g. Maryland has strictly defined when restraints and seclusion can be used and incorporated safeguards to protect the developmentally disabled. For more information, contact Leslie Margolis of the Maryland [Disability Law Center](#).

Thank you,

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